



The Watershed Initiative

Encouraging Successful Watershed Partnerships to Protect and Restore the Nation's Water Resources

The Goals of the Watershed Initiative

In his 2003 budget, President Bush proposed \$21 million to encourage successful community-based approaches and techniques to protect water resources throughout the country. Under this new Watershed Initiative, EPA will conduct a national competition to select up to 20 watersheds for grants to support promising watershed-based approaches to clean water. The goal is to advance the successes of watershed coalitions that have performed watershed assessments and are ready to carry out on-the-ground clean up and restoration projects.

Funding is subject to the availability of appropriations. If approved, the majority of the funds will be made available in the form of grants to support watershed-specific projects. Typical project awards will range from \$300,000 to \$1,300,000. A small percentage of the total appropriation will go toward enhancing national tools, training, and technical assistance that will help local partnerships be more effective at improving watershed health.

This program “recognizes the important role that states and local communities have in helping to achieve our common goals, by giving them the power to do what works.”

**Christine Todd Whitman
EPA Administrator**

The Nomination Process

Nominations must be submitted by Governors or Tribal Leaders. Each Governor or Tribal Leader may prepare or solicit watershed proposals in a manner most appropriate to their state or tribe, and nominate the most meritorious to EPA. Watershed organizations interested in pursuing a Watershed Initiative grant are, therefore, encouraged to gain the support and approval of their Governors and Tribal Leaders.

Each Governor or Tribal Leader is invited to nominate two intra-state or intra-tribal watersheds. There is, however, no limit on the number of inter-state or joint state and tribal watersheds that can be nominated. For inter-state or joint state and tribal watershed projects, any of the involved Governors/Tribal Leaders may submit the nomination as long as they have the endorsement of all affected governmental entities. Watershed projects that transcend international borders may be considered, provided that the appropriate water agency in the adjacent country is a partner or otherwise supports the project.

Nominations will undergo review at the regional level and at the headquarters level. EPA Regions will submit top proposals to be ranked by a panel of experts from EPA Program and Regional Offices as well as other federal agencies. Administrator Whitman will select the final watersheds early next year. Once selected, winners will be asked to complete the standard Agency grant application package and negotiate the final workplan with EPA Regional staff.

The Nomination Package

Nominations must be received on or before **November 21, 2002**. EPA is requesting that electronic copies of the full nomination package be submitted to



initiative.watershed@epa.gov. Two paper copies must be sent to: Robert Wayland, Director, Office of Wetlands, Oceans, and Watersheds; Mail Code 4501T; USEPA; 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW; Washington, DC 20460. Submissions by courier should be sent to: Robert Wayland, Director, Office of Wetlands, Oceans, and Watersheds; USEPA; Rm. 7130; 1301 Constitution Avenue; NW, Washington, DC 20004. Mark all submissions: ATTN: EPA Watershed Initiative. **To avoid delays related to enhanced security at government facilities, applicants are encouraged to use courier service.**

Each should contain a **one-page cover letter signed by the Governor or Tribal Leader** and a **10-page narrative** that clearly outlines existing efforts and explains how the infusion of additional funds will result in cleaner water. The nomination package must:

- Characterize the watershed, identify the problem(s) and/or threat(s), and describe the overall watershed plan.
- Describe the proposed projects.
- Describe the roles, responsibilities, and qualifications of project staff and stakeholder involvement.
- Describe how the projects may serve as a model for other communities and how the public will be informed and involved.

A minimum **non-Federal match of 25%** of the total project budget is required. Detailed project budgets, letters of support, and match certifications must be included and may be submitted as appendices. For more specifics, see the **checklist or the Federal Register Notice**.

Evaluation

Nominations will be scored according to four criteria, for a possible score of 40. Extra points (five each) will be awarded for nominated watersheds that are inter-jurisdictional (i.e., multi-state), and/or exceed the minimum match requirement, for a possible total of 50 points.

- **Focus on results (20 points).** Successful candidates must demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of the watershed, present a sound approach for mitigating threats or impairments, and be likely to achieve measurable, objective environmental results in a relatively short time period.
- **Broad support (10 points).** Project proposals that demonstrate and document strong and diverse stakeholder and community involvement will be favored.
- **Innovation (5 points).** Because designated watersheds are expected to serve as models, projects that undertake unique, innovative, or novel approaches to environmental problem-solving will be scored higher. Proposals that address regulatory challenges or provide for market-based incentives are two examples.
- **Compatibility with other federal or state programs (5 points).** Points will be awarded to those project proposals that integrate the common goals and complement the ongoing efforts occurring at the federal, state, or local level.

Nominations should be limited to 10 unbound pages of 12 point text, excluding the cover letter. Narratives exceeding ten pages will be disqualified. Project budgets, maps, letters of support and match certifications may be appended. Appended budgets should include a breakdown by category of cost. For more specifics on the nomination package, see the checklist or the Federal Register Notice at <http://www.epa.gov/owow/watershed/initiative/>.

